

H1N1 FLU CASE DIAGNOSED IN ORAU OAK RIDGE OFFICE

The Oak Ridge Office was informed today by Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) that one of their employees tested positive for the H1N1 flu virus. The message below was distributed to ORAU employees this afternoon, and we are sharing it with you. There is no reason to become alarmed or concerned for your own safety. However, seeing a positive test for H1N1 here in Oak Ridge is evidence that we cannot become complacent just because it is summer and not a typical time that we are normally concerned with the flu virus. I urge each of you to continue to practice good personal hygiene and take the necessary steps to protect your personal health.

Gerald Boyd

ONE H1N1 FLU CASE DIAGNOSED IN ORAU OAK RIDGE OFFICE

During the last few weeks, nine to 10 ORAU employees in Oak Ridge have reported a variety of flu-like symptoms through our Occupational Health office. Of that number, one person has received a positive diagnosis of H1N1 flu. This individual became ill early the week of June 15th, and saw their family physician for treatment. The physician treated the patient, ordered rest at home for at least seven days, and ordered the H1N1 flu test. This individual has already recovered, been medically cleared to return to work, and is currently on the job.

We are sharing this information with you, not to alarm you, but to remind you to not be lulled into complacency during the summer months. The flu or any virus can hit at any time of the year, and you should continue to follow standard hygiene practices.

As has been advised previously about the flu, take these steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick for seven days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) tells us that is usually 2-4 days from the time of infection until an individual begins showing symptoms. The symptoms of this new H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue.

In this case, we have talked with and been monitoring the coworkers who might have been exposed to the H1N1 virus, and none of them have developed any symptoms almost two weeks later.

Research has shown that the influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces—such as papers and doorknobs—but only for two to eight hours. Without a human host, the virus dies and is no longer dangerous.

Please know that Occupational Health and the Environment, Safety, and Health Department are monitoring the situation in Oak Ridge and all ORAU locations closely. We are also calling upon the expertise and knowledge we have within our Professional and Technical Training organization and the staff who are helping support CDC in their health communications related to H1N1.

ORAU will continue to monitor the situation closely, and we ask that you remain vigilant about the personal hygiene items outlined above. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact ORAU Nurses Sally Gadola, 865/241-2124, and/or Wade Williamson, 865/576-0733.